



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/170,189	10/13/1998	OLIVIER HERBAUT	1418-40	6524

7590 05/21/2002

HARRISON AND EGBERT
412 MAIN STREET
7TH FLOOR
HOUSTON, TX 77002

EXAMINER

FLEMING, FAYE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3616

DATE MAILED: 05/21/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/170,189

Applicant(s)

HERBAUT, OLIVIER

Examiner

Faye Fleming

Art Unit

3616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 17-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rhodes, Jr. ('819) Rhodes, Jr. teaches an airbag module comprising a cover (10) an air bag (30); a vehicle bodywork; body having a first layer and a second layer, said body having a first edge and a second edge; a retaining means (60) said retaining means comprising a flap of flexible material integrally formed with and extending from said first edge of said body, said flap being permanently affixed to said vehicle bodywork such that said body is in hinged relationship to said vehicle bodywork; and a fixing means (58) for releasably fixing said body to said vehicle bodywork, said fixing means for releasing from said vehicle bodywork when said air bag is inflated such that said air bag inflates without tearing said body or said flap of flexible material, said fixing means being secured to said second layer, said fixing means comprising a first strip of hook-and-loop material and a second strip of hook-and-loop material complementary to one another and detachably engaged with one another, one of said first and second strips being secured to said body, the other of the said first and second strips being secured directly onto said vehicle bodywork. Regarding the thermoformable synthetic cellular material, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time

Art Unit: 3618

the invention was made to have thermoformable synthetic cellular material to provide shape, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

Regarding claim 18, said body having an embellishment sheet extending over a surface of said first layer opposite said second layer.

Regarding claim 19, said fixing means being affixed adjacent said second edge of said body.

Regarding claim 21, said bodywork comprises a projection (10a) extending outwardly of said housing, said projection having one end affixed to said bodywork and another end adjacent said opposite edge of said body.

Regarding claim 22, said body having a rounded portion (12a) at said opposite end, said rounded portion releasably received within a groove formed on said bodywork.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed February 25, 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In response to the applicant's arguments that the recitation of "a flap of flexible material integrally formed with and extending from said first edge of said body" is not shown nor suggested Rhodes, Jr. ('819), although they are not structurally one piece, "integral" is a sufficiently broad term to embrace constructions united by such means as fastening. Integral by definition, can be something formed as a unit with another part. With respect to thermoformable synthetic cellular material, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a thermoformable synthetic cellular material, since it has been held to

Art Unit: 3618

be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. Further, the reference clearly teach the claimed structure.

Conclusion

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Faye Fleming whose telephone number is (703) 305-0209. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:00-5:00) First Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on (703) 308-2089. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-2571 for regular communications and (703) 308-2571 for After Final communications.

Art Unit: 3618

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

Faye Fleming
Examiner
Art Unit 3618

fmf
May 20, 2002


PAUL N. DICKSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600 5/20/02